This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (previously amended): A method for automatic control of the transmission of an E-mail,

wherein a plurality of agent parameters controlling the behavior of an agent delivering an E-mail are appended to the main mail text having an appended mail header, the agent parameters are responsive to a send command designating the transmission of the E-mail for transmission to a recipient;

wherein the agent parameters are modified responsive to the contents of experiences reflecting the operating hysteresis for the agent; and further

wherein an E-mail of a pre-set illustrative sentence is sent by said agent to [the recipient] a user of the agent based on said agent parameters.

Claim 2 (previously amended): The method of claim 1 wherein a control procedure is performed so that an illustrative sentence of an E-mail for transmission is randomly selected from a plurality of illustrative sentences classed and pre-set depending on the contents of experiences acquired by said agent so that the selected sentence is in a class consistent with the contents of experiences acquired by said agent, the selected sentence being voluntarily sent to the user of the agent.

Claim 3 (previously amended): The method of claim 2 wherein an effective period of said agent is set and an E-mail is voluntarily sent to the user of said agent upon expiration of said effective period.

Claim 4 (previously amended):   A method for automatic control of the transmission of an E-mail,

wherein a plurality of agent parameters controlling the behaviour of an agent delivering an E-mail are appended to the main text having an appended mail header, responsive to a send commend designating the transmission of the E-mail, for transmission to a recipient;

wherein the agent parameters are modified responsive to the contents of experiences reflecting the operating hysteresis for the agent; and further

wherein an E-mail of a pre-set illustrative sentence is transmitted by said agent to the recipient based on said agent parameters.

Claim 5 (previously amended):   The method of claim 4 wherein a control procedure is performed so that an illustrative sentence of an E-mail for transmission is randomly selected from a plurality of illustrative sentences classed and pre-set depending on the contents of experiences acquired by said agent so that the selected sentence is in a class consistent with the contents of experiences acquired by said agent, the selected sentence being voluntarily sent to said recipient.

Claim 6 (previously amended):   A method for automatic control of the transmission of an E-mail,

wherein a plurality of agent parameters controlling the behavior of an agent delivering an E-mail are appended to the main mail text having an appended mail header, responsive to a sending command designating the transmission of the E-mail, for transmission to a recipient;

wherein the agent parameters are modified responsive to the contents of experiences reflecting the operating hysteresis for the agent; and further

wherein the user or the recipient is randomly selected by the agent based on said agent parameters, and an E-mail of a pre-set illustrative sentence is sent by said agent to the user or to the recipient.

Claim 7 (previously amended):   The method of claim 6 wherein an illustrative sentence of an E-mail for sending is randomly selected from a plurality of illustrative sentences classed and pre-set depending on the contents.

Claim 8 (previously amended):   The method of claim 7 wherein an effective period of said agent is set and an E-mail is voluntarily sent to the user or to the recipient upon expiration of said effective period.

Claim 9 (previously amended):   An apparatus for automatic control of the transmission of an E-mail, comprising:

An agent manager for displaying an agent and for managing the behaviour of said agent responsive to agent parameters which determine the behaviour of said agent;

send command accepting means for accepting a send command designating a transmission of an E-mail; and

mail transmission means controlled by said agent manager upon acceptance by said send command accepting means of a send command which designates the transmission of an E-mail for appending the agent parameters to the main mail text having an appended mail header for transmitting an E-mail to a recipient;

wherein said agent manager modifies the agent parameters responsive to the contents of experiences reflecting the operating hysteresis for the agent to voluntarily send to the user an E-mail of an illustrative sentence pre-set by the agent based on the agent parameters.

Claim 10 (previously amended):   The apparatus of claim 9 wherein said agent manager randomly selects an illustrative sentence of an E-mail for transmission from a plurality of illustrative sentences classed and pre-set depending on the contents of experiences acquired by said agent so that the selected sentence is in a class consistent with the contents of experiences acquired by said agent, said agent manager voluntarily transmitting the selected sentence to the user.

Claim 11 (previously amended):   The apparatus of claim 10 wherein an effective period of said agent is set and an E-mail is voluntarily transmitted to the user upon expiration of said effective period.

Claim 12 (previously amended):   An apparatus for automatic control of the transmission of an E-mail, comprising:

an agent manager for displaying an agent and for managing the behaviour of said agent responsive to agent parameters which determine the behaviour of said agent;

sending command accepting means for accepting a send command designating the transmission of an E-mail; and

main transmission means controlled by said agent manager upon acceptance by said send command accepting means of a send command which designates the transmission of an E-mail for appending the agent parameters to the main mail text having an appended mail header, for sending an E-mail to a recipient;

wherein said agent manager modifies the agent parameters responsive to the contents of experiences reflecting the operating hysteresis for the agent to voluntarily send to the recipient an E-mail of an illustrative sentence pre-set by the agent based on the agent parameters.

Claim 13 (previously amended):   The apparatus of claim 12 wherein said agent manager randomly selects an illustrative sentence of an E-mail for transmission from a plurality of illustrative sentences classed and pre-set depending on the contents of experiences acquired by said agent so that the selected sentence is in a class consistent with the contents of experiences acquired by said agent, said agent manager voluntarily sending an E-mail to the recipient.

Claim 14 (previously amended):   An apparatus for automatic control of the transmission of an E-mail, comprising:

an agent manager for displaying an agent and for managing the behaviour of said agent responsive to agent parameters which determine the behaviour of said agent;

send command accepting means for accepting a send command designating the transmission of an E-mail; and

mail transmission means controlled by said agent manager upon acceptance by said send command accepting means of a send command which designates the transmission of an E-mail, said mail sending means appending the agent parameters to the main mail text having an appended mail header, for sending an E-mail to a recipient;

wherein said agent manager modifies the agent parameters responsive to the contents of experiences reflecting the operating hysteresis for the agent for voluntarily sending to the user or recipient an E-mail of an illustrative sentence pre-set by the agent based on the agent parameters.

Claim 15 (previously amended):   The apparatus of claim 14 wherein said agent manager randomly selects an illustrative sentence of an E-mail for sending from a plurality of illustrative sentences classed and pre-set depending on the contents of experiences acquired by said agent so that the selected is in a class consistent with the contents of experiences acquired by said agent, said agent manager voluntarily sending an E-mail to the user or to the recipient.

Claim 16 (previously amended):   The apparatus of claim 15 wherein an effective period of said agent is set and an E-mail is voluntarily sent to the user upon expiration of said effective period.

Claim 17 (previously amended): An automatic E-mail transmission control program supply medium for supplying an automatic transmission control program that can be read and executed by a computer, wherein, responsive to a send command for designating the transmission of an E-mail, a plurality of agent parameters are appended to the main mail text having an appended mail header, wherein the behaviour of said agent is managed by the agent parameters, the agent parameters modified responsive to the contents of experiences reflecting the operating hysteresis for the agent, and wherein

a control procedure is performed for automatic transmission by the agent of an E-mail of a pre-set illustrative sentence based on said agent parameters to the user.

Claim 18 (previously amended): The medium of claim 17 wherein said control procedure is performed so that an illustrative sentence of an E-mail for transmission is randomly selected from a plurality of illustrative sentences classed and pre-set depending on the contents of experiences acquired by said agent so that the selected sentence is in a class consistent with the contents of experiences acquired by said agent, the selected sentence being voluntarily sent to the user.

Claim 19 (previously amended): The medium of claim 18 wherein said control procedure is performed so that an effective period of said agent is set and an E-mail is voluntarily sent to the user upon expiration of said effective period.

Claim 20 (previously amended): An automatic E-mail transmission control program supply medium for supplying an automatic transmission control program that can be read and executed by a computer, wherein, responsive to a send command for designating the transmission of an E-mail, a plurality of agent parameters are appended to the main mail text having an appended mail header, wherein the behaviour of said agent is managed by the agent parameters, the agent parameters are modified responsive to the contents of experience reflecting the operating hysteresis for the agent, and wherein a control procedure is performed for automatic transmission by the agent of an E-mail of a pre-set illustrative sentence based on said agent parameters to the user or to a recipient.

Claim 21 (previously amended): The medium of claim 20 wherein said control procedure is performed so that an illustrative sentence of an E-mail for transmission is randomly selected from a plurality of illustrative sentences classed and pre-set depending on the contents of experiences acquired by said agent so that the selected sentence is in a class consistent with the contents of experiences acquired by said agent, sentences classed and pre-set depending on the contents of experiences acquired by said agent so that the selected sentence is in a class consistent with the contents of experiences acquired by said agent, the selected sentence being voluntarily sent to a recipient.

Claim 22 (previously amended): An automatic E-mail transmission control program supply medium for providing an automatic transmission control program that can be read and executed by a computer, wherein, responsive to a send command for designating the transmission of an E-mail, a plurality of agent parameters are appended to the main mail text having an appended mail header, wherein the behaviour of said agent is managed by the agent parameters, the agent parameters modified responsive to the contents of experiences reflecting the operating hysteresis for the agent, and wherein the agent randomly selects the user or a recipient based on the agent parameters for voluntarily sending an E-mail of a pre-set illustrative sentence to the user or to the recipient.

Claim 23 (previously amended): The medium of claim 22 wherein a control procedure is performed so that an illustrative sentence of an E-mail for transmission is randomly selected from a plurality of illustrative sentences classed and pre-set depending on the contents of experiences acquired by said agent so that the selected sentence is in a class consistent with the contents of experiences acquired by said agent, the selected sentence being voluntarily sent to the user or to the recipient.

Claim 24 (previously amended): The medium claim 23 wherein said control procedure is performed so that an effective period of said agent is set and an E-mail is voluntarily sent to the user upon expiration of said effective period.

Claim 25 (previously amended):   A method for automatic control of information distribution over the internet for on-line shopping,

wherein a plurality of agent parameters controlling the behaviour of an agent delivering an on-line shopping request are appended to the main mail text having an appended mail header, responsive to a send command designating the transmission of the on-line shopping request for transmission to a recipient;

wherein the agent parameters are modified responsive to the contents of experiences reflecting the operating hysteresis for the agent; and further

wherein an E-mail of a pre-set illustrative sentence is sent by said agent to the recipient based on said agent parameters.

Claim 26 (previously amended): The method of claim 25 wherein a control procedure is performed so that an illustrative sentence of an E-mail for transmission is randomly selected from a plurality of illustrative sentences classed and pre-set depending on the contents of experiences acquired by said agent so that the selected sentence are in a class consistent with the contents of experiences acquired by said agent, the selected sentence being voluntarily sent to the recipient.

Claim 27 (previously amended): The method of claim 26 wherein an effective period of said agent is set and an E-mail is voluntarily sent to the recipient upon expiration of said effective period.

Claim 28 (previously amended):   A method for automatic control of information distribution over the internet for on-line shopping,

wherein a plurality of agent parameters controlling the behaviour of an agent delivering an on-line shopping request are appended to the main mail text having an appended mail header, responsive to a send command designating the transmission of the on-line shopping request, for transmission to a recipient;

wherein the agent parameters are modified responsive to the contents of experiences reflecting the operating hysteresis for the agent; and further

wherein an E-mail of a pre-set illustrative sentence is transmitted by said agent to the recipient based on said agent parameters.

Claim 29 (previously amended): The method of claim 28 wherein a control procedure is performed so that an illustrative sentence of an E-mail for transmission is randomly selected from a plurality of illustrative sentences classed and pre-set depending on the contents of experiences acquired by said agent so that the selected sentence is in a class consistent with the contents of experiences acquired by said agent, the selected sentence being voluntarily sent to said recipient.

Claim 30 (previously amended): A method for automatic control of information distribution over the internet for on-line shopping,

wherein a plurality of agent parameters controlling the behaviour of an agent delivering an on-line shopping request are appended to the main mail text having an appended mail header, responsive to a send command designating the transmission of the on-line shopping request, for transmission to a recipient;

wherein the agent parameters are modified responsive to the contents of experiences reflecting the operating hysteresis for the agent; and further

wherein the user or the recipient is randomly selected by the agent based on said agent parameters, and an E-mail of a pre-set illustrative sentence is sent by said agent to the user or to the recipient.

Claim 31 (previously amended): The method of claim 30 wherein an illustrative sentence of an E-mail for transmission is randomly selected from a plurality of illustrative sentences classed and pre-set depending on the contents of experiences acquired by said agent so that the selected sentence is in a class consistent with the contents of experiences acquired by said agent, the selected sentence being voluntarily sent to the user or to the recipient.

Claim 32 (previously amended): The method of claim 31 wherein an effective period of said agent is set and an E-mail is voluntarily sent to the user or to the recipient upon expiration of said effective period.

Claims 33-48 (canceled).

Claim 49 (previously amended). A method of controlling a virtual agent, comprising the steps of:

generating a virtual agent adapted to deliver E-mails and having a plurality of agent parameters, said agent parameters configured to determine a behavior of said virtual agent;

displaying said virtual agent on a display unit;

interacting with said virtual agent on said display unit, including positioning at least a portion of a display of an input device over said virtual agent on said display unit, detecting an input signal from said input device, and modifying the agent parameters such that said displaying step displays said virtual agent in response to said input signal; and

updating said plurality of agent parameters based on said interacting step such that the behavior of said virtual agent is continuously modified.

Claim 50 (canceled).

Claim 51 (canceled).

Claim 52 (previously presented): The method of claim 49 wherein said input signal includes one of petting said virtual agent and hitting said virtual agent.

Claim 53 (canceled).

Claim 54 (previously presented): The method of claim 49 wherein said virtual agent is capable of generating one or more messages based on the updated agent parameters responsive to a state of said virtual agent.

Claim 55 (previously presented): The method of claim 54 further including the step of automatically transmitting said one or more generated messages from said virtual agent to a corresponding user for display on said display unit.

Claim 56 (previously presented): The method of claim 55 wherein said one or more displayed messages indicates the state of said virtual agent.

Claim 57 (previously presented): The method of claim 49 wherein said step of displaying includes the step of animating said displayed virtual agent.

Claim 58 (previously presented): A method automatic control of the transmission of an E-mail, comprising the steps of:

receiving a send command designating the transmission of an e-mail to a recipient;

appending a plurality of agent parameters to a main mail text of said e-mail, said agent parameters controlling the behavior of an agent delivering said e-mail;

transmitting said e-mail to said recipient;

automatically returning an indication when said recipient has received said e-mail; and

modifying said agent parameters based on said agent interacting with said recipient.

Claim 59 (previously presented): The method of claim 58 wherein said agent parameters are continuously updated based on interaction of said agent such that the behavior of said agent is continuously modified.

Claim 60 (previously presented): The method of claim 58 wherein said transmitting step includes the step of transmitting said e-mail via a mail server, and further,

wherein said e-mail includes an expiration period such that when said recipient does not receive said e-mail within said expiration period, automatically purging said e-mail at said mail server.

Claim 61 (previously presented):   The method of claim 58 wherein said agent is a virtual pet, and further, wherein said virtual pet is animated.

Claim 62 (previously presented):   The method of claim 58 wherein said agent is provided with a predetermined life span.

Claim 63 (previously presented):   The method of claim 62 further including the step of generating a message when said life span expires.

Claim 64 (previously presented):   The method of claim 63 further including the step of displaying said message when said life span expires.

Claim 65 (previously presented):   The method of claim 58 further including the step of displaying one or more predetermined messages selected by said agent, wherein said selected one or more predetermined messages is indicative of a state of said agent.

Claim 66 (previously presented):   The method of claim 65 wherein said agent selects one or more predetermined messages based on said plurality of agent parameters.

Claim 67 (previously presented):   An apparatus for controlling a virtual agent, said apparatus comprising:

means for generating a virtual agent adapted to deliver E-mail and having a plurality of agent parameters, said agent parameters configured to determine a behavior of said virtual agent;

a display unit adapted to display said virtual agent;

means for interacting with said virtual agent on said display unit, said interacting means including means for positioning at least a portion of a display of an input device over said virtual agent on said display unit, means for detecting an input signal from said input device, and means for modifying the agent parameters such that said display unit displays said virtual agent in response to said input signal; and

means for updating said plurality of agent parameters using said interacting means such that the behavior of said virtual agent is continuously modified.

Claim 68 (previously presented): An apparatus for automatic control of an E-mail transmission, said apparatus comprising:

means for receiving a send command designating the transmission of an E-mail to a recipient;

means for appending a plurality of agent parameters to a main mail text of said E-mail, said agent parameters controlling the behavior of an agent delivering said E-mail;

means for transmitting said E-mail to said recipient;

means for automatically returning an indication when said recipient has received said E-mail; and

means for modifying said agent parameters based on said agent interacting with said recipient.

Claim 69 (previously presented): A computer readable medium for controlling a virtual agent, wherein said medium generates a virtual agent adapted to deliver E-mail and having a plurality of agent parameters, said agent parameters are configured to determine a behavior of said virtual agent;

wherein said virtual agent is displayed on a display unit;

wherein said virtual agent interacts on said display unit including positioning at least a portion of a display of an input device over said virtual agent on said display unit, detecting an input signal from said input device, and modifying the agent parameters such that said display unit displays said agent in response to said input signal; and

wherein said plurality of agent parameters are updated based on said interaction such that the behavior of said virtual agent is continuously modified.

Claim 70 (previously presented): A computer readable medium for automatic control of the transmission of an E-mail wherein said medium, on receiving a send command designating the transmission of an E-mail to a recipient, appends a plurality of agent parameters to a main mail text of said E-mail, said agent parameters controlling the behavior of an agent delivering said E-mail;

wherein said E-mail is transmitted to said recipient;

wherein an indicator that said recipient has received said E-mail is automatically returned; and

wherein said agent parameters are modified based on said agent interacting with said recipient.

Claim 71 (previously presented): A method for providing a virtual agent, said method comprising the steps of:

storing a first agent parameter controlling a first agent kept by a first person on a first computer operated by said first person;

storing a first image data of said first agent on said first computer;

storing a second image data of a second agent being kept by a second person on said first computer;

displaying said first agent on a first screen connected to said first computer based on said first image data and said first agent parameter; and

sending said first agent parameter to said first computer through a communication network using E-mail.

Claim 72 (previously presented): The method according to claim 71 wherein said first agent is displayed as an animated character.

Claim 73 (previously presented): The method according to claim 71 further including receiving a second agent parameter controlling a second agent kept by said second person through the communication network using E-mail and displaying said second agent on said first screen connected to said first computer based on said second image data and said second agent parameter.

Claim 74 (previously presented): The method according to claim 71 further including detecting a first event corresponding to said first agent and updating said first agent parameter with said detected first event.

Claim 75 (previously presented): The method according to claim 73 further including detecting a second event corresponding to said second agent and updating said second agent parameter with said detected second event.

Claim 76 (previously presented): A method according to claim 71 further including randomly generating said first agent parameter.

Claim 77 (previously presented): A method of providing a virtual agent, said method comprising the steps of:

storing a first agent parameter in a first storage device, said first agent parameter controlling a first virtual agent adapted to deliver E-mail kept by a first person;

transferring said first agent parameter from said first storage device to a first memory device for controlling said first agent at a first computer operated by said first person; and

sending said first agent parameter from said first memory device to a second computer remote from both said first storage device and said first computer through a communication network.

Claim 78 (previously presented): The method according to claim 77 wherein said first agent parameter is sent from said first memory device to a remote computer without passing through said first storage device.

Claim 79 (previously presented): The method according claim 77 wherein said first agent parameter is sent from said first memory device to a remote computer through an Internet service provider.

Claim 80 (previously presented): The method according to claim 77 wherein said first storage device is a hard disk drive.

Claim 81 (previously presented): The method according to claim 77 wherein said first memory device is random access memory.

Claim 82 (previously presented): The method according to claim 77 further including randomly generating said first agent parameter.

Claim 83 (previously presented): A method of providing a virtual agent, said method comprising the steps of:

sending a first agent parameter at a first computer operated by a first person to a second computer remote from said first computer using E-mail through a communication network, wherein said second computer is operated by a second person and said first agent parameter controls a first agent kept by said first person;

receiving said first agent parameter sent from said second computer at said first computer;

receiving a second agent parameter sent from said second computer at said first computer, said second agent parameter controlling a second virtual agent kept by said second person; and

sending said received second agent parameter to said second computer using said first computer.

Claim 84 (previously presented): The method according to claim 83 further including processing said first agent parameter to execute said first agent at said first computer.

Claim 85 (previously presented): The method according to claim 83 further including processing said second agent parameter to execute said second agent at said first computer.

Claim 86 (previously presented): The method according to claim 83 further including detecting a first event corresponding to said first agent and updating said first agent parameter with said detected event.

Claim 87 (previously presented): The method according to claim 83 further including detecting a second event corresponding to said second agent and updating said second agent parameter with said detected event.

Claim 88 (previously presented): The method according to claim 86 wherein said first event is a first interaction between said first agent and said second agent.

Claim 89 (previously presented): The method according to claim 86 wherein said first event is a second interaction between said first agent and an operation by said first person.

Claim 90 (previously presented): The method according to 87 wherein said second event is a third interaction between said second agent and said first agent.

Claim 91 (previously presented): The method according to 87 wherein said second event is a fourth interaction between said second agent and an operation by said first person.

Claim 92 (previously presented): The method according to claim 83 further including randomly generating said first agent parameter.

Claim 93 (previously presented): A method of providing a virtual agent, said method comprising the steps of:

detecting one or more events corresponding to a first virtual agent adapted to deliver E-mail, wherein the behavior of said first virtual agent is determined by a plurality of first agent parameters;

updating said plurality of first agent parameters based on a current first agent parameter with each detected event such that the behavior of said first virtual agent is continuously modified with each detected event; and

wherein said events include an interaction between said first virtual agent and a second virtual agent controlled by a second agent parameter and an interaction between said first virtual agent and an operation by an operator.

Claim 94 (previously presented): The method according to claim 93 further including receiving said second agent parameter through a communication network.

Claim 95 (previously presented): The method according to claim 93 further including updating said second agent parameter.

Claim 96 (previously presented): The method according to claim 95 further including sending said updated second agent parameter through a communication network.

Claim 97 (previously presented): The method according to claim 93 further including sending said first agent parameters through a communication network.

Claim 98 (previously presented): The method according to claim 93 further including randomly generating said first agent parameters.

Claims 99-104 (canceled).

Claim 105 (previously presented): A method of providing an agent, said method comprising the steps of:

storing a first agent software;

storing an agent parameter controlling a behavior of an agent;

executing said first agent software using said agent parameter to control the behavior of the agent; and

sending said agent parameter using E-mail to a remote computer storing a second agent software which is substantially the same as said first agent software so that said second agent software can be executed using said agent parameter to control the behavior of the agent.

Claim 106 (previously presented): The method according to claim 105 further including receiving said agent parameter from said remote computer.

Claim 107 (previously presented): A method of controlling a virtual agent, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a virtual agent having a plurality of agent parameters, said agent parameters configured to determine the behavior of said virtual agent;

sending said agent parameters to a recipient through a network using E-mail;

setting a state of said virtual agent to an absent state corresponding to said sending step; and

selectively displaying said virtual agent on the display unit according to said state wherein said virtual agent is displayed on a display unit when said state represents other than said absent state.

Claim 108 (previously presented): The method of claim 107 further including receiving said agent parameters through the network, setting the state of said virtual agent to an existing state corresponding to said receiving step, and selectively displaying said virtual pet on the display unit according to said state wherein said virtual pet is displayed on a display unit when said state represents said existing state.

Claim 109 (previously presented): The method of claim 108 wherein said received agent parameters have been modified.

Claim 110 (previously presented): The method of claim 109 wherein said received agent parameters have been continuously modified.

Claim 111 (previously presented): The method of claim 107 wherein said agent parameters include sending date and time information, and setting the state of said virtual agent to an existing state after a lapse of pre-set time based on the sending date and time information.

Claim 112 (previously presented): An apparatus for providing a virtual agent, said apparatus comprising:

means for storing a first agent parameter controlling a first agent kept by a first person on a first computer kept by said first person;

means for storing a first image data of said first agent on said first computer;

means for storing a second image data of a second agent kept by second person on said first computer;

a display unit connected to said first computer adapted to display said first agent on a first screen based on said first image data and said first agent parameter; and

means for sending said first agent parameter to said first computer through a communication network using E-mail.

Claim 113 (previously presented): An apparatus for providing a virtual agent, said apparatus comprising:

means for storing a first agent parameter in a first storage device, said first agent parameter controlling a first virtual agent kept by a first person;

means for transferring said first agent parameter from said first storage device to a first memory for controlling said first agent at a first computer operated by said first person; and

means for sending said first agent parameter from said first memory to a second computer remote from both said first storage device and said first computer through a communication network using E-mail.

Claim 114 (previously presented): An apparatus for providing a virtual agent, said apparatus comprising:

means for sending a first agent parameter at a first computer operated by a first person to a second computer remote from said first computer through a communication network using E-mail, wherein said second computer is operated by a second person and said first agent parameter controls a first agent kept by said first person;

means for receiving said first agent parameter sent from said second computer using said first computer;

means for receiving a second agent parameter sent from second computer at said first computer, said second agent parameter controlling a second virtual agent kept by said second person; and

means for sending a received said second agent parameter to said second computer using said first computer.

Claim 115 (previously presented): An apparatus for providing a virtual agent, said apparatus comprising:

means for detecting one or more events corresponding to a first virtual agent adapted to deliver an E-mail, wherein the behavior of said first virtual agent is determined by a plurality of first agent parameters;

means for updating said plurality of first agent parameters based on a current first agent parameter with each detected event such that the behavior of said first virtual agent is continuously modified with each detected event; and

means for interacting said first virtual agent with a second virtual agent controlled by a second agent parameter and said first virtual agent with an operation by an operator.

Claim 116 (canceled).

22

Claim 117 (previously presented): An apparatus for providing an agent, said apparatus comprising:

means for storing a first agent software;

means for storing an agent parameter controlling a behavior of an agent;

means for executing said first agent software using said agent parameter to control the behavior of said agent; and

means for sending said agent parameter using E-mail to a remote computer storing a second agent software which is substantially the same as said first agent software so that said second software can be executed using said agent parameter to control the behavior of the agent.

Claim 118 (previously presented): An apparatus for controlling a virtual agent, said apparatus comprising:

means for providing a virtual agent having a plurality of agent parameters, said agent parameters configured to determine the behavior of said virtual agent;

means for sending said agent parameters to a recipient through a network using E-mail;

means for setting a state of said virtual agent to an absent state corresponding to said sending means sending said agent parameters; and

means for selectively displaying said virtual agent on the display unit according to said state connected to a display unit wherein said virtual agent is displayed when said state is other than said absent state.

Claim 119 (previously presented): A computer readable medium for providing a virtual agent, wherein said medium stores a first agent parameter controlling a first agent kept by a first person a first computer operated by said first person; stores a first image data of said first agent on said first computer; stores a second image data of a second agent being kept by second person on said first computer; displays said first agent on a first screen connected to said first computer based on said first image data and said first agent parameter; and wherein said first agent parameter is sent to said first computer through a communication network using E-mail.

Claim 120 (previously presented): A computer readable medium for of providing a virtual agent wherein a first agent parameter is stored in a first storage device, said first agent parameter controlling a first virtual agent kept by a first person;

wherein said first agent parameter is transferred from said first storage device to a first memory for controlling said first agent at a first computer operated by said first person; and

wherein said first agent parameter is sent from said first memory to a second computer remote from both said first storage and said first computer through a communication network using an E-mail.

Claim 121 (previously presented): A computer readable medium for providing a virtual agent wherein a first agent parameter at first computer operated by a first person is sent to a second computer remote from said first computer through a communication network using E-mail, wherein said second computer is operated by a second person and said first agent parameter controls a first agent kept by said first person;

wherein said first agent parameter sent from said second computer is received using said first computer;

wherein a second agent parameter sent from second computer is received using said first computer, said second agent parameter controlling a second virtual agent kept by said second person; and

wherein a received said second agent parameter is sent to said second computer using said first computer.

Claim 122 (previously presented): A computer readable medium for providing a virtual agent using an E-mail wherein said medium detects one or more events corresponding to a first virtual agent and the behavior of said first virtual agent is determined by a plurality of first agent parameters;

said plurality of first agent parameters are updated based on a current first agent parameter with each detected event such that the behavior of said first virtual agent is continuously modified with each detected event; and

wherein said events include an interaction between said first virtual agent and a second virtual agent controlled by a second agent parameter and an interaction between said first virtual agent and an operation by an operator.

Claim 123 (canceled).

Claim 124 (previously presented): A computer readable medium for providing an agent wherein the medium stores a first agent software;

wherein an agent parameter controlling a behavior of an agent is stored;

wherein said first agent software is executed using said agent parameter to control the behavior of the agent; and

wherein said agent parameter is sent using E-mail to a remote computer storing a second agent software which is substantially the same as said first agent software so that said second software can be executed using said agent parameter to control the behavior of the agent.

Claim 125 (previously presented): A computer readable medium for controlling a virtual agent wherein said medium provides a virtual agent having a plurality of agent parameters, said agent parameters configured to determine the behavior of said virtual agent;

wherein said agent parameters are sent to a recipient through a network using E-mail;

wherein a state of said virtual agent is set to an absent state corresponding to sending said agent parameters to said recipient; and

wherein said virtual agent is selectively displayed on the display unit according to said state, wherein said virtual agent is displayed on a display unit when said state represents other than said absent state.